

# Social Issues & Trends: Overview



Social Planning Council  
of Cambridge and North Dumfries

Social Issues Advisory Committee  
of Cambridge

**United Way of Cambridge & North Dumfries**

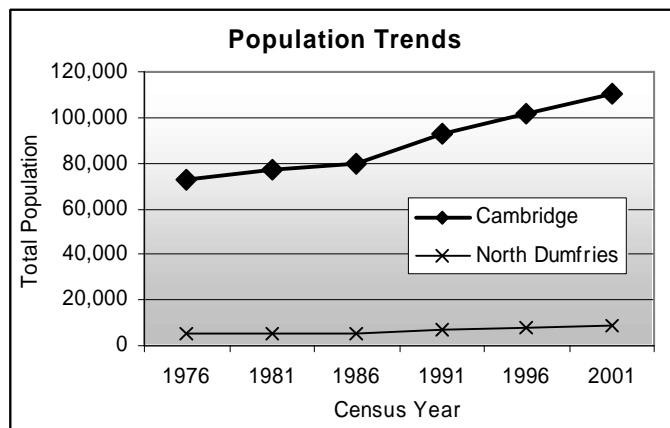
**February 2003**

The purpose of this paper is to provide information on social trends and issues to United Way's Allocations Committee so that its members are able to make informed choices and plans to meet the needs of this community. This Report highlights some of the demographic profile information from the 2001 Census describing the makeup of the City of Cambridge and it includes information and recommendations from the Social Issues Advisory Committee's 2002 community forums. It should be recognized that this report is only a snap shot of social trends in Cambridge. A more in depth Social Issues and Trends Report will soon be released.

The Social Planning Council has a rich history of providing data and information to social service organizations, policy makers and funders. The Social Planning Council believes that research on the health and well-being of communities, with an emphasis on measuring progress being made and where more work is needed, is critical for long-term community sustainability.

## Cambridge Demographic Profile

The following 2001 Census data from Statistics Canada provides a foundation for the rest of this report on local issues and trends<sup>1</sup>.



It is projected that the population of Cambridge will grow from just over 110,000 in 2001 to over 130,000 in 2016. North Dumfries is expected to grow from 8700 to 10,000 by 2016.<sup>2</sup>

## 2001 Age Breakdown (in unequal categories)

Age	Cambridge		North Dumfries	
	Population	% of total	Population	% of total
0-4	7,230	6.6%	600	6.8%
5-14	16,670	15.1%	1,475	16.8%
15-19	7,835	7.1%	665	7.6%
20-24	7,090	6.4%	445	5.1%
25-44	35,390	32.1%	2,680	30.6%
45-64	23,990	21.7%	2,120	24.2%
65 plus	12,175	11.0%	775	8.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110,370</b>		<b>8,770</b>	

## Cambridge 2001 Demographic Information

- 17.9% of the population first learned and still understands a language other than English or French
- There are 775 people (0.7%) of Aboriginal origin.
- 9.1% of the population is a visible minority, with the largest groups being South Asian, Black, Southeast Asian, Chinese, and Latin American.
- 45.8% of the population have moved in the previous five years, and 14.6% in the previous year.
- 14.9% of families are lone-parent families
- 28.7% of dwellings are rented and 71.3% are owned.
- Approximately 12% of the population reported unpaid care or assistance to seniors, while approximately 31% reported unpaid care for children.
- 71.3% of the population participated in the work force.

## North Dumfries 2001 Demographic Information

- 10.5% of the population first learned and still understands a language other than English or French
- There are about 25 people of Aboriginal origin.
- 1.2% of the population is a visible minority.
- 35.0% of the population have moved in the previous five years, and 7.6% in the previous year.
- 7.8% of families are lone-parent families
- 10.4% of dwellings are rented and 89.8% are owned.
- Approximately 17% of the population reported unpaid care or assistance to seniors, while approximately 35% reported unpaid care for children.
- 77.5% participated in the work force.



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## Trends and comments from the 2002 SIA process

This paper is produced as part of the work of the Social Issues Advisory (SIA) Committee. The Social Issues Advisory Committee provides a medium for discussion of social issues, unmet needs and community capacities. From the information coming forward, the SIA develops recommendations to pass on to local decision makers. The City of Cambridge and the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries graciously fund the SIA.

Through a consultative process during the year 2001, several issues were identified as critical for the Cambridge community. These included: youth, seniors, multiculturalism, community health, basic needs, literacy, volunteerism, accessibility, transportation, violence, poverty and childcare. The SIA chose to focus its efforts on hosting of community forums during the year 2002. Topics selected were identified priority issues and areas that were not already being addressed by other Cambridge-based initiatives. The output from each of the forums, plus the resulting recommendations and some background information, were subsequently documented and publicly released through a paper series. These papers are available on the Social Planning Council website.

### Poverty & Basic Needs (March 2002)

As poverty compounds and underlies many other social issues the SIA Committee chose to host its first community forum on poverty and basic needs. The Poverty and Basic Needs paper includes summaries of the forum's working group discussions, the resulting recommendations and background information in the areas of working poor, employment and retraining, special needs, housing and homelessness, food, and youth. Reoccurring themes from the forum discussion includes the need for: more income and a living wage; child care; transportation, lack of awareness of services/support available; and advocacy.

### Recommendations to United Way

- That the United Way and the City of Cambridge encourage their funded agencies and local businesses to provide program hours outside the regular business hours to better meet the needs of the working poor and then promote these expanded hours to the community.

- That the United Way and the City of Cambridge encourage their funded agencies and local employers to review their compensation packages to ensure that staff are provided living wages.

There is a growing body of evidence to support movement towards living wages. For examples, see:

- "From Poverty to a Living Wage" by C. Schenk, [www.socialjustice.org/pubs/schenk.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.org/pubs/schenk.pdf).
- An overview of the City of Toronto's Fair Wage policy at <http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/fairwage/policy.html>
- Canadian Policy Research Network's publication *Smart Social Policy – "Making Work Pay"* by Judith Maxwell go to [www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org)

- That the United Way and the City of Cambridge encourage their funded agencies and local employers to develop and implement family friendly human resource policies; and that the United Way and the City of Cambridge similarly review their own human resource policies.
- That the Social Planning Council, United Way, the City of Cambridge and the Region of Waterloo's Social Service Department encourage local training and retraining organizations and specifically their funded agencies to reduce or remove barriers to their training (i.e. costs, hours of availability, eligibility criteria, transportation).
- That the Social Planning Council dialogue with Information Cambridge (Cambridge Volunteer Bureau) and United Way on means to increase awareness of community supports, services and assets.

### Volunteerism (June 2002)

Working groups at the Volunteerism forum discussed three questions; "What support or resources are available?"; "What are the issues/needs?" and "What action needs to take place?". The recommendations outlined in the paper were generated by forum participants and target decision makers including the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Cambridge, United Way, the Volunteer Bureau, the School Board and non-profit agencies. The themes include volunteer management; volunteering supports; coordination and links; flexibility and youth volunteers.

### Recommendations to United Way

- That the United Way develop and provide strategies and/or guidelines to local organizations to assist with volunteer management. Financial support is needed to allow agencies to address volunteering barriers such as childcare, transportation, accessibility, police checks, etc.
- That the United Way work with the City of Cambridge and Volunteer Bureau to spearhead a series of meetings with Cambridge non-profit boards of directors. These would be an opportunity to discuss sustainability of volunteers in the non-profit sector.

According to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, "in the year 2000 charitable and non-profit organizations were relying on a somewhat smaller core group of people to provide the bulk of charitable dollars and volunteer hours." The report also notes, "such reliance on a small minority of the population to provide the bulk of volunteer time and charitable donations may be a source of vulnerability for charitable and non-profit organizations and the people they serve."<sup>3</sup>

### Childcare (June 2002)

The Childcare forum brought together parents, childcare providers and administrators to discuss the resources available, priority issues and required action. Three themes emerged from the discussions: accessibility of childcare; government role in childcare; and childcare staff recognition, reimbursement, training and support. The resulting paper includes recommendations to the City of Cambridge, the Region and other community partners. The recommendations challenge local decision

"Quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are central in a strategy to reduce poverty. ECEC also strengthens the foundations of lifelong learning for all children, supports the social needs of families, and promotes equal opportunities for women in the labour market. While opportunities to participate in early childhood education and care should be available to all children, Canada's ECEC programs fall far short in meeting the needs of families and children."<sup>4</sup>

John Godfrey, MP in his report on a National Child Care Strategy argues that the most effective strategy to address child poverty is to invest in a childcare strategy. "First, it would allow parents to improve their education, upgrade their skills and enter the work force. Second, it would improve the developmental outcomes of our children, allowing them the opportunity to participate fully in society."<sup>5</sup>

makers to recognize child care issues in our community and create social and work environments that are family-friendly.

### Recommendations to United Way

- That the United Way continue to work from a Healthy Community model which values childcare services and the link to a number of issues including employment and healthy child development.
- That United Way fund childcare services as childcare is foundational to the involvement of many participants in United Way-funded programs.<sup>3</sup>

### Emerging Issues and Next Steps

A Stakeholder's Forum was held in November 2002 to get feedback on the work of the SIA after its first year of operation and to provide an opportunity for input into the next steps. As well, those in attendance were given an opportunity to identify current social issues that they see in the community. The following is the list of issues (in ranked order) that was generated from this process:

- family stress (single parents, women, aging parents, decrease in supports) (X4)
- youth (hopelessness, homelessness, stress, education/double cohort) (X3)
- poverty (perception, stigma, women, seniors, increasing utilities, depth of poverty, working poor) (X3)
- seniors (poverty, transportation) (X2)
- women's issues (family stress, poverty, addiction programs) (X2)
- decrease in social support system
- need for more prevention
- school closings
- housing (affordable)
- baby boomers
- services for New Canadians
- lack of funding
- transportation (seniors)
- mental health services
- aging workforce
- lack of addiction programs (women)

The SIA will be doing more research throughout the year to further explore these issues as identified. This will include seeking more input from other focus groups in the community as well as collecting more statistical information on social issues.

This paper was compiled by the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries for the 2003 Allocations Process of the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries.

This paper highlights information from a number of forums and previous papers prepared by the Cambridge Social Issues Advisory Committee over the last two years. For more detail on any of these issues please see those papers or contact the Social Planning Council.

The Social Planning Council has also published other research reports on topics such as:

- Volunteerism (2002)
- Childcare (2002)
- Poverty & Basic Needs (2002)
- Social Issues & Trends in Cambridge (2002),
- Proposed Shelter & Housing Supports Best Practices,
- Disability Demographics,
- Rooming Houses & Low Cost Hotels,
- Poverty Demographics,
- Quality of Life in Waterloo Region,
- Human Services Sector Issues,
- Our Common Future visioning progress report,

For more information about this paper or about other related research, please contact:

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## Social Issues Advisory Committee

The main purpose of the Cambridge Social Issues Advisory (SIA) committee will be to track the pulse of our communities. It will provide a public forum for discussion of social service issues, unmet needs, community capacities, etc. Relevant information will then be distributed regularly to City Council and the United Way.

Recommendations will be formulated on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the social issues brought to the meetings.

The goals of the SIA committee are:

1. To collect and share information about unmet needs and the local capacities to deal with these needs in our community.
2. To liaise with the human service sector and the broader community in order to ensure that diverse voices are heard in new and existing policy/program developments.
3. To provide advice to City Council and United Way based on local analyses of social issues.
4. To respond to requests for information from City Council and the Board of United Way.
5. To advocate for needed resources from other levels of government for Cambridge as necessary.
6. Create an annual "Year in Review" report on significant issues (e.g., social issues, human service issues, etc).

<sup>1</sup> Note that all census data is for approximately June of that census year.

<sup>2</sup> These 2016 projections were made by the Regional Municipality of Waterloo in their *1998 Region of Waterloo Statistical Profile: Population and Households*. It is based on the 1996 census population rather than the 2001 census data.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, M.H., McKeown, L., & Roberts, K. "Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating", August 2001, Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

<sup>4</sup> Campaign 2000, [www.campaign2000.ca/rc/rc02/3.html](http://www.campaign2000.ca/rc/rc02/3.html)

<sup>5</sup> John Godfrey, "A National Child Care Strategy: Getting the Architecture Right Now." November, 2002.